

Asbestos - Frequently asked questions:

Is there asbestos in my building?

If your house or building was constructed prior to the early 1980's there's a good chance that some of the materials used in the construction contain asbestos.

Where can asbestos be found?

Asbestos has been found in many products around construction sites. It has been used in: clapboard; shingles and felt for roofing; exterior siding; pipe and boiler covering; compounds and cement, such as caulk, putty, roof patching, furnace cement and driveway coating; wallboard; textured and latex paints; acoustical ceiling tiles and plaster; vinyl floor tiles; and appliance wiring. Loose-fill vermiculite insulation may contain traces of "amphibole" asbestos.

How do I know for sure if there is asbestos in MY building?

If you do not know if products in your building contain asbestos have an experienced contractor inspect them. If there is asbestos the best interim measure (unless the product is peeling or deteriorating) is to seal the surface temporarily so that fibres will not be released into indoor air. If the product is already protected or isolated, simply leave it alone. To find companies that specialize in asbestos detection and testing, look in the Yellow Pages™ under "Asbestos".

What can or should I do if asbestos is found in my building?

It is a complex and expensive matter to remove asbestos, and should be done by an experienced contractor. When disturbing an asbestos product, maximum precautions must be taken to safeguard the workers and anybody else who may be nearby. Asbestos dust must remain within the work area so that it cannot be breathed in by unprotected persons.

When does asbestos need to be removed?

If you know that your building contains asbestos it must be removed prior to being disturbed or where work takes place near asbestos. This means if your building contains asbestos and you plan to alter, add to or demolish your building, your first call should be to a qualified asbestos abatement contractor.

What are my responsibilities as an owner?

If asbestos is found in your building you are required by law to keep a detailed and up-to-date inventory of the asbestos-containing material in your building. This record should be kept for at least 30 years and be made available to anyone who may perform work to your building.

If you plan to make alterations to your building or demolish it, you are required to take measures to ensure that asbestos-containing material is prevented from entering the atmosphere and that no person working on your building is exposed to any asbestos-containing material that may create a risk to their safety or health.

If you know that your building contains asbestos and you plan to alter or demolish it, you are required to contact Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health at least 5 days prior to starting.

For more information on the proper detection, abatement, handling and disposal of hazardous materials within your home, contact Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health at 204-726-6361.